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Buddhism

Part of Exhibit on Religions of the World shown at
STUDENT VOLUNTEER MOVEMENT CONVENTION
KANSAS CITY, Mo., December 31, 1913-January 4, 1914

"He that loseth his life for My sake shall find it."

Points of Contrast.

Personality, Human and Divine.

Buddhism.

Buddhism started from the Hindu pantheistic conception of the Universe. Buddhism produces stoic agnosticism. Morality apart from God. Human Personality is a curse to be got rid of. Yet this conception tends to make "I" centre and goal. "Bliss of all bliss, joy of all joys it is To leave behind the lie that says 'I am.'" Personality passes. Deeds remain. Doctrine of Karma non-moral.

Christianity.

Christianity is built upon the Hebrew monotheistic conception of a Personal God. Christianity produces personal faith. Morality through the Spirit of God. Human personality is a gift to be consecrated. Yet this conception tends to make Christ centre and goal. "I have been crucified with Christ yet I live; and yet no longer I but Christ liveth in me." Personality developed in God. Deeds and their consequences gathered into the Eternal.

The Problem of Sin.

Man seen to be out of harmony with Law. Hence the great problem is suffering. Evil is seen as sin against self.

Man seen to be out of harmony with God. Hence the great problem is sin. Evil is seen as sin against a loving Father.

The Way Out.

Self possession. "Be to your own selves your own refuge. By oneself the evil is done, by oneself one is purified." Extinction of all desire. "Those who love nothing and hate nothing have no fetters."

Self-surrender to God. "Ye are not your own." "Redeemed by the precious blood of Christ." Implanting of holy desire. "It is God which worketh in you to will."

Attitude to Life.

Pessimistic, though with pity at the heart of it.

Hope with suffering sympathy at the heart of it. Emmanuel.

Therefore.

Sad withdrawal from the world, uncertainty, depression, apathy, despair. Ethics self-centred, to deliver men from life. History, chaos.

Glad striving for the world's redemption, confidence, joy, peace, fellow-workers with God. Ethics social, to fit men for life. History, infinite progression.

The Goal.

Repose. Buddhism is futureless. Release from the misery of existence into passionless peace. Desire extinguished. "Those who are free from all desire attain Nirvana."

Service. "Thy Kingdom come." Deliverance from sin and misery into abundant life in God. Desire satisfied. "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

Northern and Southern Buddhism.

Gautama circ. 500 B.C.

Buddhism was early divided into two great sections:—

Northern.

Mahayana or the Great Vehicle. Theistic, optimistic. Relying on supernatural help. Elaborate ceremonial. Less exacting moral code. Influenced by Persian and Greek thought and later by the Nestorian Church.

Found to-day in

Nepal, Tibet, Siberia. Mongolia, China, Korea, Japan.

Southern.

Hinyana or the Little Vehicle. Atheistic, pessimistic and materialistic. Relying on self-help. A simpler ritual. Keeps closer to original teaching.

Ceylon, Burma, Annam, Siam.

Failure.

Doing meritorious acts according to Buddha is like walking in a dark and empty house. We are walking in darkness without seeing a light, a person or a hope.

A Buddhist leader in Ceylon.

Hunger.

Buddhists everywhere look to some Loving One — Amida Buddha, Kwan-yin, Maitra—who by love shall inspire them to realise the high ideals before which they now sit helpless.

A Missionary.



O Christ, Thy love to all the world
Is Thine eternal Cross,
From everlasting Thou hast borne
The sorrow of our loss;
And on the tree Thy sacrifice
Hath shewn Thy love the life
That, bearing sin unto the death,
Hath triumphed in the strife.



The Harvest Law of Christ.

Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth
and die
it abideth by itself alone;
but if it die it beareth much fruit.

Points of Contact.

Stress Laid on Inward Character.

Buddhism.

"To cease from all sin, to get virtue To cleanse one's own heart— This is the religion of the Buddhas."

Christianity.

"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."

Stress Laid on the Passive Virtues.

"Let a man overcome anger by love, evil by good, the greedy by liberality, the liar by truth."

"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you. Blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are the meek. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness. Blessed are the merciful. Blessed are the pure in heart. Blessed are the peacemakers."

Renunciation and Self-Sacrifice.

"Let all the sins that have been committed in this Age fall on me and let the world be delivered."

Buddha.

"Who is he that would demur when the salvation of the world is at stake?"
An early Buddhist Missionary.

"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life." "Whosoever renounceth not all that he hath cannot be My disciple."

Self-Discipline.

"If one man conquer in battle a thousand times a thousand men, and if another conquer himself, he is the greatest of conquerors."

"The fruit of the Spirit is self-control." "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation."

The Law of Harvest.

Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.

But

"Not in all the mighty mountains nor in the great continent will you find so much room for forgiveness as you find at the end of a hair."

"There is forgiveness with Thee that Thou mayest be feared." "Faithful and righteous to forgive."

Missionary Activity.

The ground lost by Southern Buddhism in India through Brahman persecution and Mohammedan invasion was more than regained in Central and Eastern Asia by the missionary activity of the Northern Buddhists.

Northern Buddhism has been a missionary religion but it has compromised by its degradation with Animistic thought and practice, and is now broken up into many sects. In Japan it was for 1,000 years amalgamated with Shinto.

Amida Sects.

Three-quarters of the Buddhists of Japan, belonging to the two great sects, Jodo and Shin, and most of those of China, Korea and Central Asia worship Amitabha (or Amida) Buddha. They assume an Immanent God or Divine Presence, manifesting itself in Buddhas, trust in Amida, a pitiful Saviour, as their central object of faith, and believe that by faith in his name they will enter the "Western Paradise."



